Questions for the Reading of:

C. S. Lewis

The Problem of Pain

Preface

[1] What is the purpose of the Preface?

[2] How does Lewis refute the criticism implied in the following quotation: "He jests at scars who never felt a wound"?

[3] Is reliable knowledge the best help when one is experiencing pain?

[4] In what sense does Lewis want to present nothing new in this book?
1. Introductory

[1] What effects does the existence of reason have on the experience of pain?

[2] Why does Lewis say that the human race is doomed?


[4] What conclusions about God does Lewis see as possible for atheists?

[5] Why is the fact that belief in God exists a problem for atheists?

[6] Why can belief in the Creator not arise from a confrontation with the fact of suffering?

[7] Why is it an error to maintain that our ancestors were ignorant and therefore entertained pleasing illusions about nature which the progress of science has since dispelled?
[8] What is Lewis’ conclusion from his refutation of the idea that people in the past have come to believe in the existence of God on the basis of conclusion from the existence of the world?

[9] Why does Lewis want to study the origins of Christianity rather than the truth of Christianity?

[10] What elements—briefly—are found in all religions?

[11] In what sense is the experience of the Numinous different from fear in the face of danger?

[12] How does Lewis define the Numinous?

[13] Why is it impossible to prove that human beings have from the very first believed that the universe was haunted by spirits?

[14] What is the purpose of the paragraph beginning “Going back about a century ...”? 
[15] What is Lewis’ main concern in regard to numinous awe?

[16] Why is it important for Lewis to maintain that awe in the face of the numinous is not the result of any kind of inference on the basis of the visible universe?

[17] In what sense is it not natural that early man, being surrounded by real dangers, and therefore frightened, should invent the uncanny and the Numinous?

[18] In what sense is it a sheer jump when man passes from physical fear to dread and awe?

[19] Why does Lewis speak of beauty while treating awe?

[20] What is the third—and non-maintainable—view about awe?

[21] What are the two views that we can hold about awe?
1. Introductory

[22] In what sense do the moral experiences resemble awe?

[23] How does Lewis disprove the reduction of moral experience to something else?

[24] In what regard do all the moralities accepted by men agree?

[25] How does it happen that all humans are conscious of guilt?

[26] Why can the consciousness of guilt not be an inference from the facts of experience?

[27] What two possible interpretations of moral consciousness does Lewis admit?

[28] What would be the third kind of interpretation?

[29] In what way does religion identify the Numinous and morality?
1. Introductory

[30] How does Lewis show that the identification of the Numinous and morality is not obvious?

[31] Why can the identification of the Numinous and morality not be explained as wish fulfillment?

[32] What is the peculiarity of the Jews in regard to the identification of the Numinous and morality?

[33] From what does the identification of the Numinous and morality make one safe?

[34] Why is Abraham relevant in regard to the identification of the Numinous and morality?

[35] Why does Lewis write "once more" at this point?

[36] In what does the specific Christian element consist?
[37] How does Lewis justify his statement that only two views of Jesus are possible?

[38] Why can it be said that Christianity creates, rather than solves, the problem of pain?

[39] Why does Lewis criticize the question whether the universe as we see it looks more like the work of a wise and good Creator or the work of chance, indifference, or malevolence?

[40] Why can a person rebel against religion without being absurd?

[41] Why is it not possible that humans simply invented the idea of the Incarnation?

[42] What does Lewis mean when he calls the Incarnation “the master touch”?

[43] Why is it that Christians have the “problem” of pain?